DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 330 509 RC 018 055

AUTHOR Hodgkinson, Harold L.; And Others
TITLE The Demographics of American Indians: One Percent of the People; Fifty Percent of the Diversity.
INSTITUTION Institute for Educational Leadership, Washington, D.C.
REPORT NO ISBN-0-937-846-60-0
PUB DATE Nov 90
NOTE 36p.
AVAILABLE FROM Institute for Educational Leadership, 1001 Connecticut Ave. NW, Suite 310, Washington, DC 20036 (1-9 copies, $12.00 each, 10-24, $10.50 each, over 24, $9.00 each).
PUB TYPE Reports - Descriptive (141) -- Statistical Data (110)

EDRS PRICE MF01 Plus Postage. PC Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS *Alaska Natives; American Indian Reservations; *American Indians; *Demography; Educational Attainment; Elementary Secondary Education; Higher Education; Poverty; Tables (Data); *Tribes

ABSTRACT

This publication draws on census figures and various other sources to pull together the available demographic data on American Indians and Alaska Natives. According to census figures, in the United States in 1988 there were 1.7 million Native Americans belonging to about 500 tribes and native groups and speaking about 200 languages, but only 308 groups have a relationship with the federal government. Consequently, federal Indian agencies use numbers different from those used by the Census Bureau. Sections on population and residence (1) compare American Indian population, age, birth rate, infant mortality, mortality rate, suicide rate, and poverty rate to figures for total U.S. and non-White populations; (2) estimate numbers of Indians living on or near reservations in 21 states; and (3) provide details on the 10 states with largest Indian populations, the 10 largest tribes, and the 10 most populous reservations. The section on health discusses birth rates, infant mortality rates, mortality rates and leading causes of death, alcoholism death rates, and life expectancy. Sections on education and employment examine school enrollments; high school dropout rates; higher education enrollment; educational risk factors; associate, bachelor, and masters degrees awarded in selected subject areas, and unemployment. This publication contains 23 references and 22 data tables, graphs, and maps. (SV)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED330509

THE DEMOGRAPHICS OF AMERICAN INDIANS:

One Percent of the People; Fifty Percent of the Diversity

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

by
Harold L. Hodgkinson
with Janice Hamilton Outtz
and Anita M. Obarakpor

RC 018055
BEST COPY AVAILABLE

INSTITUTE FOR EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP, INC. / CENTER FOR DEMOGRAPHIC POLICY CDP

THE DEMOGRAPHICS OF AMERICAN INDIANS:

One Percent of the People; Fifty Percent of the Diversity

by
Harold L. Hodgkinson

with Janice Hamilton Outtz
and Anita M. Obarakpor

Center for Demographic Policy
Institute for Educational Leadership, Inc.

Acknowledgements

This report would not have been possible without the support of several foundations including Exxon, U.S. West and ARCO, and the persons of Scott Miller, Jane Prancan and Eugene Wilson respectively. Others providing general support to the Center for Demographic Policy are: BP America, Southwestern Bell, William T. Grant, Joyce, Charles Stewart Mott, Monsanto and Metropolitan Life Foundations. An early meeting with American Indian scholars and leaders, arranged by Norbert Hill of American Indian Science & Engineering Society and a former fellow of the Institute, was very helpful in pointing out the problems we would encounter as well as providing leads to data. Norbert was also very helpful with the graphics used in the report. We have tried throughout the report to acknowledge the debt we owe to a wide variety of people (see Appendix).

In addition, Michael Usdan, President of the Institute for Educational Leadership, provided overall support for this project, while Louise Clarke, IEL's Chief Administrative Officer, and Betty Hale, Vice President, were helpful in a variety of ways. Tony Browder of East Koast Graphics provided exceptional graphics expertise. Our thanks are extended to all.

We also need to acknowledge that we are not American Indians. We have tried hard to comprehend and be sensitive to the differences in world view, but we would be the first to admit that our understanding is limited. While all of the authors shared responsibility for this project, errors of fact and interpretation remain the responsibility of the senior author.

Harold L. Hodgkinson
Janice Hamilton Outtz
Anita M. Obarakpor

November 1990

Copies are available by writing to the IEL Publications Department at the address below. Orders must be prepaid. Prices are:

1– 9 copies	$12.00 each
10–24 copies	$10.50 each
25+ copies	$9.00 each

Or you may contact the American Indian Science & Engineering Society: 1085 14th Street, Suite 1506, Boulder, CO. 80302-7309 (303) 492-8658.

ISBN 0-937-846-60-0
© 1990
Institute for Educational Leadership, Inc.
Center for Demographic Policy
1001 Connecticut Avenue, N.W. Suite 310
Washington, D.C. 20036
(202) 822-8405
(202) 872-4050 FAX

Cover Design: East Koast Graphics

Table of Contents

Acknowledgments	ii
Highlights of Demographic Trends	v
Introduction	1
Who Discovered America?	3
How Many American Indians Are There?	5
Where Do American Indians Live?	7
How Healthy Are American Indians?	15
Can Indians Be "Well-Educated" As Indians and As Americans Too?	21
Can Indians Get Good Jobs Without Leaving the Reservation?	25
Major Sources Used In Preparing This Report	27
Appendix—Additional Acknowledgements	29

Highlights of Demographic Trends

- For every "endangered species" of plant or animal, there are about FIVE "endangered cultures" of American Indian peoples. It is easy to whip up public concern for the Snail Darter, but difficult for people to get concerned about the demise of human cultures.
- For every child born in the U.S., two children were born to the Alaska Native population.
- The number one cause of death in 1986 (for all age groups) for American Indian/Alaska Natives was accidents.
- The vast majority of American Indians have to leave the reservation in order to get jobs that pay enough to support families.
- Over 300,000 Indians live in metropolitan areas.
- The suicide rate for American Indians is more than twice the rate for all other nonwhites.
- Although there are an estimated 500 tribes in existence, more than half the American Indian population are members of ten tribes according to census data.
- American Indian youth have the highest high school dropout rate of any minority group, while at the same time more Indian youth are preparing to go to college.
- Four times as many people report being of Indian "ancestry" as report being American Indians.
- Of the 1.7 million American Indians reported by the Census Bureau, 66 percent live in ten states.
- The poverty rate for American Indian families was considerably higher than the rate for the general population (24 percent compared to 10 percent), but lower than the rate for African Americans (29 percent). The poverty rate for three of the top ten most populous Indian states was over 40 percent.

When we are asked about any group of human beings, a natural question is: "How are they doing?" At the moment, the question can just barely be asked of American Indians, in that the information about them is so uncoordinated and fragmented. In many areas, there are no data available or as in the case of the 1980 data from the U.S. Census Bureau, released ten years after collecting the data. At a time when policymakers are beginning to rely on demographic data for decision-making and program planning, it is a disgrace that data on American Indians are so scarce.

Our hope is that as more tribal colleges and BIA schools are infused with Indian leadership, more Indian youth will be proud to be Indians *and* U.S. citizens. This hope is unlikely to become reality with the existing level of federal and state resources for American Indians in addition to the lack of knowledge and understanding about American Indians by non-Indians.

THE DEMOGRAPHICS OF AMERICAN INDIANS:
ONE PERCENT OF THE PEOPLE; FIFTY PERCENT OF THE DIVERSITY

Introduction

America is a land of extraordinary diversity, a nation of nations, a place in which over two hundred non-Indian languages are spoken from Florida to California, home for two-thirds of the world's immigrants. Managing that much diversity in a population of almost 250 million people is an extraordinary task. But it is small compared to the diversity of American Indians, whose 1.7 million people speak two hundred other languages! While they represent less than one percent of the U.S. population, they have as much diversity as the other 99 percent put together.

As the decade of the 1990s begins, there seems to be increased interest in American Indians[1] in the United States. From the novels of Tony Hillerman to the museums to state legislatures, there is more talk now about Indians than during the 1980s. However, the talk is disjointed, based on the work efforts of a few individuals, and without a clear foundation in fact. The reason is obvious—there are few facts collected and presented by government agencies which are readily available about American Indians. If one looks at all U.S. government surveys, one usually finds Indian data included with Asians and--or Hispanics in a category called "other." While it is easier today to get involved in the issues of African American and Hispanic poverty, jobs, family life, it is very difficult to feel close to the problems and potentials of people called "others," and impossible for people who are not included at all because of general omission or omitted because the numbers were too small to be statistically reliable. (For example, of the 1,487 tables making up the Census Bureau's *Statistical Abstract of the United States, 1990*, only four present data on American Indians.)

And thus, we come to the reason for this book: to put together in one short, easily-read publication the demographic data relating to the American Indian people. Just as psychologists might study motivations and sociologists small groups, demographers study populations. Considering that very few people could even pronounce demographics in 1980, the field has come a long way in just a decade. The reason is that demographic data are useful and very unambiguous in describing populations—if birth rates decline, that decline washes over the age range like the tide. (Kenneth Boulding referred to demographics as the "celestial mechanics of the social sciences.") If white fertility declines and nonwhite immigration continues, then the society becomes more ethnically diverse through time.

The U.S. census is the single most important demographic data source. One key to the importance of things is how rapidly the data from the census are analyzed. While many business and political analyses using data from the 1980 census were published within six months of the release date, the 1980 census data on the "demographic, social, and economic characteristics of American Indian tribes" were only released in a Census Bureau publication dated February 7, *1990*, a full decade after the last census was finished!

It was our conviction that in 1990, data more recent than 1980 could be found about American Indian populations. Our conviction was not always correct. This study represents the most recent demographic data that could be found for American Indians, although it uses a variety of sources. The report concludes with some brief comments on what the numbers might mean.

[1]The term American Indian, as used in this report, is based on the racial classification definition used by the U.S. Census Bureau. We use "American Indian," "Indian" and "Native American" interchangeably throughout the report.

Who Discovered America?[2]

Imagine, if you will, the discovery of America. The year is 22000 B.C., and a hardy band of hunters has just crossed from Siberia to Alaska for the first time, as the Ice Age glaciers had trapped so much water that the seas were lowered to the point that our hunters could walk along what is now the Bering Strait. Given that humans have inhabited the earth for at least four million years, the "New World" was discovered (literally) only yesterday; Lief Ericson rediscovered it an hour ago; Columbus, the third such discoverer, got here only half an hour ago, and the American Revolution was twelve minutes ago (if one hour were to represent a thousand years of human history).

Many anthropologists contend as Siberian hunters and their descendents moved south, they discovered rich land and large game animals, so much so that their populations increased very rapidly. (Population increases always hasten exploration, and by 9400 B.C. humans had reached the southern parts of South America.) By 5000 B.C., in both the Andes region and southern Mexico, agriculture had been invented in a completely independent manner from Europe, and the development of maize allowed for stable villages and led directly to the sophisticated civilizations of Mexico. From Mexico, agriculture based on corn, beans and squash moved northward into the American southwest, up the Mississippi Valley, into the Eastern Seaboard and up to the Canadian border. (Curiously, the same agriculture never got to California or the Northwest—these cultures are more varied than those of the midwest and east, perhaps due to the difficulty of migrating to them compared to the easier walking routes to the east, which were always open and provided continuous access to all of the Americas, while the glaciers would close the routes to the Northwest from time to time.)

While Mexican societies became urban and centralized, America remained a region of small villages, adding the sunflower to the agriculture which came from Mexico, as well as the turkey to the list of domesticated animals. (Our turkeys were first domesticated in the southwest, not near Plymouth Rock.)

So when America was "discovered" (for at least the third time) by Christopher Columbus, about a million people were already here. Thinking he had found the Indies, he named them Indians or as other interpretations suggest the term Indian may actually have been derived from the Spanish term used by Columbus—Indios which means "Children of God." They spoke over 200 different languages in several unrelated linguistic families. Several hundred societies existed, ranging from small nomadic bands to fairly large tribal organizations. The single most important and devastating gift from the European "discoverers" was disease, especially smallpox, cholera, respiratory infections and measles. DeSoto's southern march from Florida to Mexico in 1539–1543 left populations behind that declined by half within two weeks, as the natives had no immunity and no chance to build up immunity to these European diseases. Small wonder at the Indians' reluctance to show up at the first Thanksgiving, knowing that contact with Europeans would kill up to half of those who sat down! On the other hand, the European settlers would never have survived the first winters without Indian farmers, sharing their corn, beans and squash, as well as storage, planting and fertilizing techniques. They followed trails with Indians showing the way, learned to build Indian canoes, and learned Indian herbal medicines. Arctic explorers either learned Eskimo skills or perished. While Europeans were adapting to Indian knowledge and skills, Indians were adjusting to horses, centralized governments, and rifles.

If one adds deliberate slaughter of thousands of Indians to those who died of European-based disease, it is clear that the Indian population declined from one million of Columbus' time to about half a million by 1890. Since then, Indian populations have been increasing, and are now well over their one million number, even though their distribution has changed tremendously. (Today, the Cherokee is the largest tribe according to the 1980 census, but in 1492 there were very large "tribes" in the East Coast which have since been totally destroyed, and about which little is known, since few people, Indians and settlers alike, who could write.)

Before the European invasions, American Indians were primarily local in their orientation. Large-scale Indian organizations at the national level were developed mainly as a mechanism to negotiate directly with European centralized national governments. Treaty rights granting limited sovereignty could not have been accomplished without the Indian's ability to create these new centralized structures. Compared to other invaded indigenous peoples like the aborigines in Australia and the blacks in South Africa, American Indians alone were able to regroup and restructure enough so that at least some of their lands and culture could be protected.

Although the official government policy has been mostly "assimilation" for American Indians, (read "cultural genocide") it has never worked entirely. Very few Indian tribes have completely disappeared since the times of conquest and epidemic. The major efforts of today seem to be bicultural: to allow the American Indian the right to retain language, culture and community while also allowing open access to the mainstream of education, jobs, politics and "success" (as measured by economic security). American Indian youth today are often taught in their native language as well as in English, and thousands of Indians are enrolled in colleges and will move on to a professional life. Tribal colleges and schools are increasingly in the hands of American Indian leaders. But

[2]Much of this information is from the excellent Smithsonian study, *A Nation of Nations* (Washington, D.C.: 1976). See also Russell Thornton, *American Indian, Holocaust and Survival* (1987). There are many Indian versions of this story (not all available to us), but from the authors' limited view, the above version explains the data best.

the problems of identity, individually and through water, fishing and territorial agreements and treaties, remain deep-rooted. When Americans wanted to show their distinctiveness from Europe, as at the Boston Tea Party, they donned Mohawk Headdresses, while in 1990, Mohawks in Quebec had to blockade a bridge to try to prevent a golf course from being built on a sacred Indian burial ground.

A final word needs to be said about "world view." While there is astonishing variety in American Indian culture, there are also commonalities. Some are easy for everyone to understand. An Indian's word is his/her bond. The virtues of modesty, respect for the speech of others before you reply, the sharing of what you have with others are easy. But it is almost impossible for any non-Indian (the authors included) to really understand how Indians perceive **The Land**. Most of us cannot look at nature directly—we need technological lenses to translate nature into operational terms so that we can control it. American Indians raised in Indian traditions need no such lenses.

"If men spit upon the ground, they spit upon themselves. This we know. The earth does not belong to man, man belongs to the earth. This we know. All things are connected."

(Taken from AISES: "A New Beginning")

"Land" for Europeans comes from the Magna Carta and the idea of property rights, English Common Law, etc. For American Indians, "The Land" is not something to be owned; it has its own existence. Plants ("the rooted ones") each have a spirit, as does each animal, and all of these essences are a part of the Land. To foul the Land is to dishonor all of the spirits that have ever existed there. This difference in world view is at the heart of most conflicts between American Indians and the U.S. government. It also represents an area of needed rapprochement—we once again will need Indian skills and knowledge of our environment in order to survive.

How Many American Indians Are There?

The work of the Institute for Educational Leadership's Center for Demographic Policy has involved analyses of states, counties, regions and many racial and ethnic groups. Yet the diversity we have dealt with pales before the diversity within American Indian peoples. For example, children in America's schools come from many countries and speak 200 languages. Yet, there are approximately 200 languages and dialect groups WITHIN American Indian populations. There is no comparable diversity among Americans of Hispanic or Asian descent. The universal sign of death of a culture is that no one remains who speaks the language. Today, for every "endangered species" of plant or animal, there are about FIVE "endangered cultures" of American Indian peoples. It is easy to whip up public concern for the Snail Darter, but difficult for people to get concerned about the demise of human cultures. Only Ishi, the famous California Indian, received sympathy and support as the last of his people, speaking a language he alone spoke. But today many Indian languages are known to only handfuls of people.

The question of who is an American Indian is very complex. Although there are about 500 tribes and native groups in the U.S., according to *Education Week* (August 2, 1989), only 308 have a relationship with the federal government. The Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) and the Indian Health Service (IHS) use different numbers than the Census Bureau. Before 1960, the census enumerator decided what a person's race and ethnicity were; in 1970 the census enumerator decided what a person's race was only *in some cases*. In 1980, according to the Census Bureau, "self-reporting was more widely used and there was a greater propensity for individuals to report themselves as American Indian." As a result of Hispanic not being a race for example, several million black Hispanics were discovered when the census was taken. Yet, the U.S. Congress says that for many purposes, one must belong to a recognized American Indian tribe[1], while many tribes require blood quantum measurements and other criteria for tribal membership. We have already learned from self-reporting that about four times as many people say they have Indian *ancestry* as say that they are American Indians. What follows are the latest available data for American Indians, compared with data for the total U.S. population, and for all nonwhites (see Table 1).

From this initial snapshot we can see some very interesting things. First, with all of the diversity we have just discussed, American Indians make up less than one percent of the U.S. population. The increase in Indian populations is roughly the same as for other nonwhite populations, but the reasons are probably different. The number of Indians is increasing through better counts (more self-reporting, greater outreach efforts), higher fertility, lower infant death rates and better health conditions, while other minorities are increasing through high but stable fertility, better health and immigration. Still, the average Indian is almost seven years younger than the national average. While white populations will grow slightly in *number*, they will actually decline as a percentage of the U.S. population, from 84.1 percent in 1990 to 82.6 percent in 2000. (The fertility rate for the white population in the U.S., as in most Western nations, is at or below replacement levels.) While minorities make up about 16 percent of the total U.S. population today, they make up 30 percent of youth age 0–18 years. In one generation, 30 percent of all young adults will be nonwhite as this group continues through the age range. By 2010, 38 percent of all youth will be nonwhite.

Over half of all nonwhite children born in the U.S. today will be raised by a single mother during most of their pre-adult years. A problem for many single mothers and their children is lack of job skills. As a result, about half of the 15 million children raised by single women are below the poverty line. Twenty-three percent of all Indian families are headed by single women. The poverty rate for American Indian families is more than twice the rate for the total U.S. population but lower than the rate for nonwhites. The data on infant mortality represents a startling switch, as Indian mortality rates have been twice that of the nation in the past, while today the death rates, for both mothers and children, are below the national average. While death rates for Indians were higher than the nation, they were lower than the rates for all minorities (i.e. African Americans, Asian/Pacific Islanders, Hispanics and other nonwhites). African American rates are very high due to violent deaths of males. Life expectancy for an American Indian will be about 10 years less than the national average. Suicide rates for Indians are high, even higher than their large percentage of youth suicide would suggest, and much higher than those for other minority groups. Yet suicide rates for Indians are much lower today than during the peak years of 1970–77. We will discuss this issue more in the section on health.

[1]The use of the term tribe is based upon the definition used by the U.S. Census Bureau. We recognize the fact that many contemporary American Indians prefer the term "Nation."

Table 1

PROFILE OF AMERICAN INDIANS, NONWHITES AND THE UNITED STATES

	Total Indians	Total Nonwhite	Total United States
1988 Population*	1,699,000	38,581,000	246,329,000
Percent Increase, 1980–88	+ 18.9%	+ 19.9%	+ 8.1%
Median Age, 1980	23.5 years	24.9 years**	30.0 years
Birth Rate, 1986 (per 1,000 population)	27.5	21.4	15.7
Births to Unmarried Women, 1987	45%	53%	24%
Infant Mortality, 1987 (per 1,000 live births)	9.8	15.4	10.4
Mortality Rate, 1987 (per 100,000 population)	571.7	688.0	535.5
Suicide Rate, 1988 (per 100,000 population)	15.0	6.9	11.7
Poverty Rate, 1980 (as a percent of all families)	23.7%	28.9%***	10.3%

*Indian estimates are for "Resident Population," which excludes armed services personnel abroad.

**African American only. (The median age for total nonwhites was not available.) The median age for Asian/Pacific Islander was 28.7 and Hispanic was 23.2.

***African American only. The 1980 poverty rate for Hispanics was 23.2%.

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Statistical Abstract of the United States, 1990*, and Indian Health Service, *Trends in Indian Health, 1990*.

Where Do American Indians Live?

There are several ways to answer this question—by state, by tribe, and even by reservation. Looking first at the state data, it is clear that although every state contains some Indian populations, there is a very large concentration in a few states—indeed, about five states have half of the Indian population. Table 2 on page 8 shows the states with more than 15,000 American Indians in 1980 according to the Census Bureau, along with the percent change from 1970 and 1989 estimates from BIA. The 1989 BIA data provides a VERY rough estimate of the percentage of *on or near-reservation populations* for each state. For example, California and Florida clearly have a vast majority of non-reservation Indians, while Arizona has the reverse. No estimates for the total state populations are available.

In thinking about these data, we must remember that there is little relationship between Indian ideas of location and government categories like states and metropolitan areas. However, it is useful to give a sense of direction and movement to Indian populations. First, although the concentration of Indian populations in the states listed in Table 2 declined from 88 to 85 percent, the increases in many states were spectacular. California, Texas, Michigan, Oregon, Florida, Kansas and Colorado each doubled their Indian population in one decade. Some sketchy state-based evidence suggests that gains have also been made after 1980. Most notable is Michigan, which contended that the 1980 census count was "particularly lower than the numbers documented by reliable sources such as school enrollments." The Michigan Department of Education estimated the Indian population now at 93,000 compared to the Census Bureau's 1980 count of 44,712.

Oklahoma had been the concentration point for American Indians for the last 100 years, a time when the California Indian populations were declining. Reasons for the 1970–80 recent California Indian migration are not clear, but have been voluntary; whereas many Indians who moved to Oklahoma 100 years ago did so against their will.

Data from the 1980 census show that nearly seven of every ten American Indians live in just ten states. Of these top ten states, only North Carolina, Michigan and New York are east of the Mississippi River (see Map-1 on page 10). The reality of the numbers even for these most populous states is that the Indian population is less than two percent of the total state population in seven states (see Table 3). For many of these states, the competition for resources (almost always scarce) with other minority groups is strong and may be very difficult for governors and other state legislators to reconcile when the American Indians represent such a small part of the state pie.

While it is clear that the four states with Indian populations over 100,000 are all in the West, some of the most rapid population increases have taken place in Michigan, Texas, Florida and Colorado. There are probably many reasons for this increased migration (including better reporting of data). In addition, although the numbers are comparatively small, New England states (especially Maine) showed a major increase in American Indian populations during the seventies. No one knows the real reasons behind these increases, but certainly there has been a shift in awareness of and pride in one's racial and ethnic background during the last two decades. Some major land claims settlements have been decided favorably and jobs and educational opportunities are now open to larger numbers of Indians. Additionally, previous prejudices against Indians have been softened, if not eliminated, in many areas. During the 1990s these questions can be explored—the sad thing is that it will be with data from the 1980s!

In addition to state shifts, there has been a move to cities which is quite pronounced. By 1980, over 300,000 American Indians lived in metropolitan areas, and 17 metros had more than 10,000 Indians in their population. In fact, a large component of the move to California was to the metros of Sacramento, Anaheim, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Riverside and San Diego. (Remember that a metropolitan statistical area—MSA—is not just the city limits but a complex unit including suburbs, neighboring counties and independent cities which are related to the central city.) It seems unlikely that this urbanization will continue at the same rate for Indian populations, as the relocation programs which moved Indians to cities have been reduced, and new efforts to increase jobs, health care and education on reservations may induce more people to stay there.

Even with these moves to urban areas, American Indians are unique among minority groups in the percentage who live outside metropolitan areas. About 20 percent of other populations live outside metro areas; for American Indians it's about HALF. The census data are not very helpful in providing information about non-metro populations. Many analysts assume that non-metro is the same as rural, which it definitely is not. (For example, non-metro populations are not farming populations.)

Differences were also seen in examining the top ten states by social and economic characteristics. The profile shown in Table 4 on page 12 shows how the states compare on a number of selected characteristics.

Among the top ten states, eighth ranking South Dakota is the state with the youngest American Indian population with a median age of 18.6 (half of the population younger than 19 and half older) followed by Arizona (19.9) and New Mexico (20.3). The remainder of the top ten states also show a young American Indian population except Texas which has the distinction of being the state with the oldest (27.2) American Indian population. By comparison, the median age of the United States was 30.0 for the same time period.

South Dakota is also a state with a number of troubling signs. For example, not only is it the state with half of its population of youth age, but more women head their own families in South Dakota (38 percent of all families) than in any of the other top ten states. This is particularly troublesome, since women who head their own families

Table 2

AMERICAN INDIAN POPULATION 1970, 1980 AND ESTIMATES FOR INDIANS LIVING ON AND NEAR RESERVATIONS, 1989 FOR SELECTIVE STATES

	1970 Census	1980 Census	1970–1980 Percent Change	1989 (BIA est.)
California	88,263	227,757	+157.8%	28,815
Oklahoma	96,803	171,092	+ 76.7%	231,952
Arizona	94,310	154,175	+ 63.5%	165,385
New Mexico	71,582	106,585	+ 48.9%	126,346
North Carolina	44,195	65,808	+ 48.9%	6,110
Washington	30,824	61,233	+ 98.7%	40,893
South Dakota	31,043	45,525	+ 46.7%	58,201
Texas	16,921	50,296	+197.2%	1,320
Michigan	16,012	44,712	+179.2%	12,723
New York	25,560	43,508	+ 70.2%	12,314
Montana	26,385	37,623	+ 42.6%	34,001
Minnesota	22,322	36,527	+ 63.6%	19,863
Wisconsin	18,776	30,553	+ 62.7%	21,037
Oregon	13,210	29,783	+125.5%	10,231
Florida	6,392	24,714	+286.6%	2,062
Alaska*	16,276	22,631	+ 39.0%	91,106
North Dakota	13,565	19,905	+ 46.7%	23,629
Utah	10,551	19,994	+ 89.5%	9,010
Colorado	8,002	20,682	+158.5%	10,467
Illinois	10,304	19,118	+ 85.5%	NA
Kansas	8,261	17,829	+115.8%	2,321
Percent of Total U.S. Indian Population	88.1%	84.8%		

*Does not include Eskimos and Aleuts, which, according to the Census Bureau, is a separate racial category. The 1970 and 1980 American Indian population for Alaska including Eskimos and Aleuts was: 45,216 and 64,103 respectively.

Source: (1970 data) C. Matthew Snipp, *American Indians: The First of This Land*, (1989); (1980 data) U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Characteristics of American Indians by Tribes and Selected Areas: 1980;* (1989 est) Bureau of Indian Affairs, "Indian Service Population and Labor Force Estimates," (only Indians living on or near reservations are included). No data are available for Illinois.

Note: As of this writing, there are NO census data on the Indian population by state more recent than 1980. Very few states have produced estimates of their Indian population since the 1980 census.

Table 3

AMERICAN INDIANS AS A PERCENT OF THE TOTAL STATE POPULATION TOP TEN STATES, 1980

	American Indians	Rank	Total State and U.S. Population	American Indians as a Percent of the Total State and U.S. Population
California	227,757	1	23,668,000	1.0%
Oklahoma	171,092	2	3,025,000	5.7
Arizona	154,175	3	2,286,000	6.7
New Mexico	106,585	4	1,303,000	8.2
North Carolina	65,808	5	5,882,000	1.1
Washington	61,233	6	4,132,000	1.5
Texas	50,296	7	14,229,000	0.3
South Dakota	45,525	8	691,000	6.6
Michigan	44,712	9	9,262,000	0.5
New York	43,508	10	17,558,000	0.2
Total (10 States)	970,691		82,036,000	1.2
Total U.S. Indian Population	1,478,523		226,546,000	0.7

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, *Characteristics of American Indians by Tribes and Selected Areas*, 1980 and *Statistical Abstract of the United States, 1990*.

(most of whom have children under the age of 18) tend to be poorer than other families. Higher fertility is generally associated with lower levels of social and economic well-being. This is true for South Dakota which also had the highest fertility (2,136 children born per 1,000 women) of the ten states. South Dakota Indians had a higher percentage of persons in poverty (48 percent) and the lowest median household income[4] ($8,507) of any of the top ten states. A (1987) report from South Dakota State University[5] explained the South Dakota American Indian as "in transition." The authors concluded that "with improved educational and occupational opportunities this generation of American Indians in South Dakota may, however, move through this period of transition and face a brighter future." Except for the increase in the Indian population (which was not as large as many other states), it was not apparent from reading the report what caused the period of transition.

Seventh ranked Texas, on the other hand, seems to be doing something right (or at least headed in the right direction). Only 12.5 percent of its American Indian families are headed by women, less than 18 percent of the population is in poverty and the highest median household income ($15,420) could be found in Texas. Number one ranking California is close behind in income and poverty levels but differs in its percentage of women heading their own families. In California it is 22.5 percent of all families.

In terms of education, fifth ranking North Carolina stands out with fewer high school graduates—38.5 percent of its adult population. California leads on this one with the highest percentage of high school graduates (65.5 percent) followed closely by Texas with 63.2 percent.

We can also answer the question about where Indian populations live by looking at where the tribes (nations) are. Although some 500 tribes exist, ten tribes contain more than half the Indian population (see Figure 1 on page 13). Below these ten there were only six tribes that had populations between 10,000–25,000 persons in 1980. The remainder (90 percent of all tribes) had populations of less than 10,000 people. (It should be noted that data on tribes do not always agree. The Census Bureau uses data based on self-reporting, other agencies use different criteria.)

Many Americans who are not familiar with the dynamics of American Indians think of them as a nation of homogeneous people living together in one particular region of the United States. At no time has that ever been true. American Indians are not one people and are (at least) as diverse as the number of tribes. Tribes (or nations) do not necessarily live together in one place. It is common for the population of a tribe to be scattered across the United States. For

[4]Household income includes income from all persons living in a housing unit whether they are related or not.

[5]Balk, Linda and Mary A. Bennett. *American Indians in South Dakota: A Profile*. South Dakota State University, Department of Rural Sociology, March 1987.

MAP—1

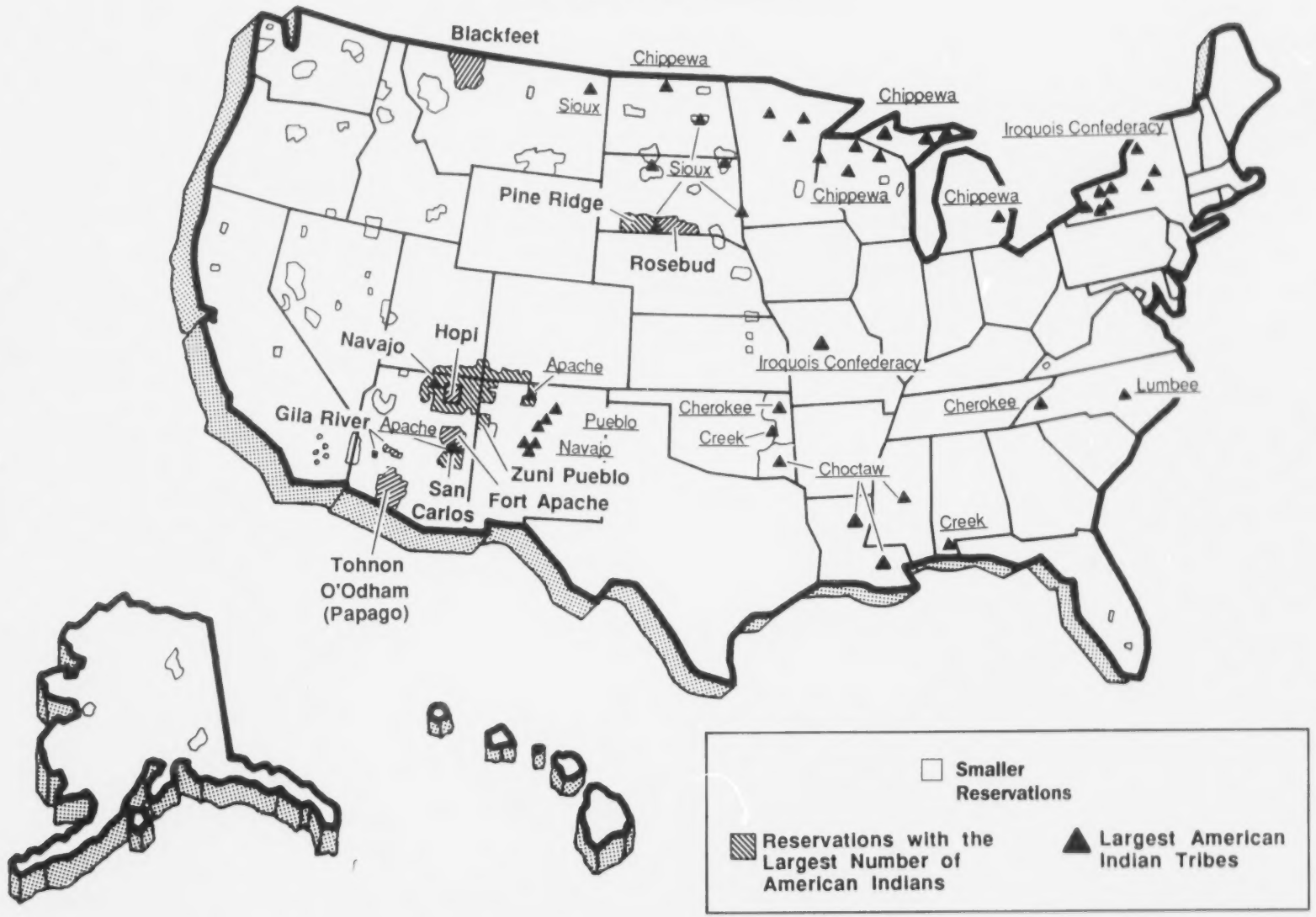
AMERICAN INDIAN POPULATION, 1980

*Does not include Eskimos and Aleuts.

Source: U.S. Census

MAP—2

LOCATIONS OF LARGEST AMERICAN INDIAN TRIBES AND SELECTED RESERVATIONS



Note: Locations of reservations based primarily on U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration Map (1985). Definition of largest tribes and most populous reservations based on 1980 census data.

Table 4

PROFILE OF AMERICAN INDIANS IN THE TOP TEN STATES, 1980

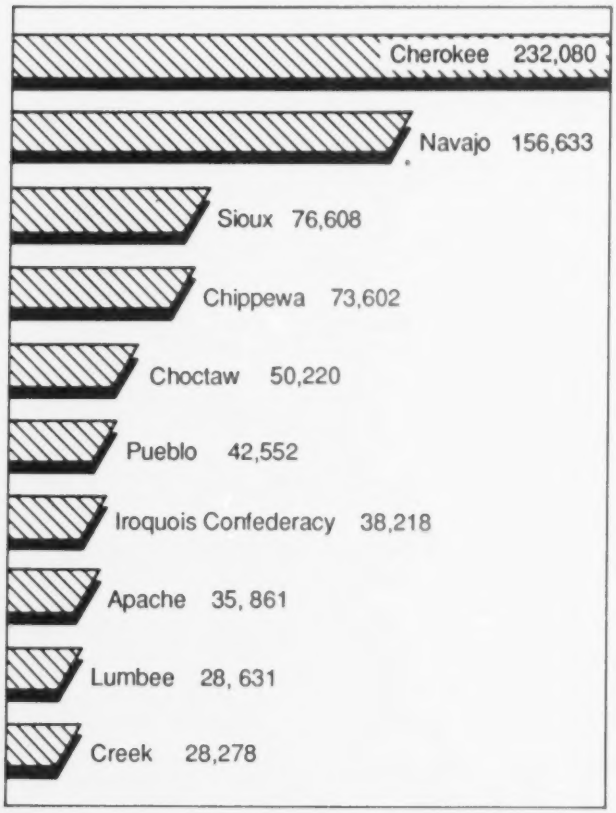
	American Indian Population[1]	Median Age	Percent Female Headed Household[2]	Fertility[3]	Percent High School Grads[4]	Percent College Grads[4]	Median Household Income	Percent of Persons Living in Poverty
California	227,757	25.8	22.5	1,510	65.5%	9.6%	$14,803	18.0%
Oklahoma	171,092	24.0	18.5	1,604	56.2	8.8	11,369	23.9
Arizona	154,175	19.9	24.8	1,844	42.4	4.3	9,578	44.0
New Mexico	106,585	20.3	24.3	1,751	47.4	5.1	9,908	40.2
North Carolina	65,808	23.3	21.0	1,713	38.5	5.8	10,742	27.9
Washington	61,233	23.0	25.5	1,693	63.2	7.4	13,291	25.0
Texas	50,296	27.2	12.6	1,593	63.2	12.4	15,420	17.5
South Dakota	45,525	18.6	38.1	2,138	46.1	4.7	8,507	47.5
Michigan	44,712	22.8	24.6	1,718	56.0	6.2	14,580	22.1
New York	43,508	26.3	31.0	1,628	55.7	8.1	11,976	24.6
U.S.	1,478,523	23.5	22.7	1,688	55.8	7.7	12,227	27.5

[1]Includes Alaska Natives; does not include Eskimos and Aleuts.
[2]As a percent of all families.
[3]Children born per 1,000 women age 15-44 years.
[4]As a percent of persons age 25 years and over.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, *Characteristics of American Indians by Tribes and Selected Areas*, 1980.

Figure 1

TEN LARGEST AMERICAN INDIAN TRIBES, 1980



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, *We, The First Americans*, 1980.

example, although most Cherokees live in Oklahoma, a large group of them can be found on a reservation in North Carolina. The Navajo, the second largest tribe according to the Census Bureau, are the exception, they live together as one nation on the Navajo reservation in Arizona and New Mexico (see Map-2 on page 11).

The 1980 census data profiling the ten largest Indian nations reveal the difficult social, economic and educational conditions they face (see Table 5). More than half of the top ten nations had 25 percent or more of their families with incomes below the poverty level. The Navajos with 42.7 percent of their families in poverty, and the Sioux with 36.5 percent, were at the top of the list.

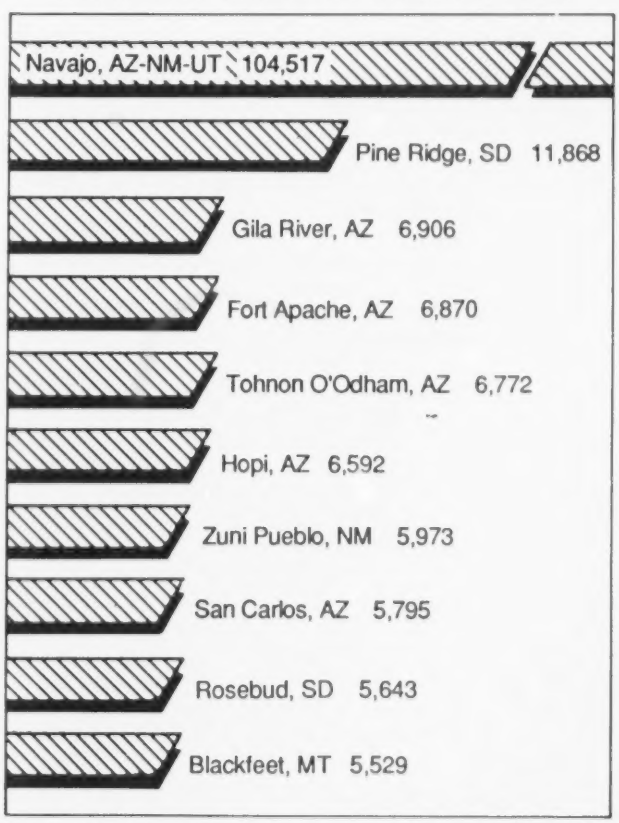
The rate of high school and college graduates (as a percent of the population over age 25) for the ten Indian nations was low when compared to the rate for the United States. The Creek Nation was the only tribe that had rates which came close to the rates for the United States. The Creek Nation had a rate of 65.1 percent of their members who were high school graduates and 11 percent who graduated from college, compared to the figures for the U.S. of 66.5 and 16.2 respectively. The Lumbees with 37.8 percent and the Navajos with 39.9 percent had the lowest high school graduation rates. The Chippewa with 5.3 percent, and the Navajos with 3.8 percent, had the lowest percentages of their population who graduated from college.

The median household income for all of the top ten Indian nations was less than $15,000 per year compared to the U.S. median of $25,426. The Iroquois Confederacy was the nation with a median household income closest to that of the U.S. and it was nearly $12,000 less than the median for the U.S. Of the top ten tribes, the Navajo seems to be the most in need of assistance in terms of economic survival. The significance of the information in the profile of the top ten tribes is critical to the future development of all Indian nations. Their success will depend upon the combined strength of all tribes.

The situation of the top ten Indian nations is also typical of that for the total Indian population. A cover story on American Indians in *Insight*[6] magazine said that "in almost every economic and health category, Native Americans continue to lag behind every other ethnic

Figure 2

TEN RESERVATIONS WITH THE LARGEST NUMBER OF AMERICAN INDIANS, 1980



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, *We, The First Americans*, 1980.

[6]*Insight*, "On Native Ground: The American Indian Today," *The Washington Times*, September 1, 1986.

Table 5

PROFILE OF THE TOP TEN AMERICAN INDIAN TRIBES, 1980

Rank	Tribe	American Indian Population	Median Age	Married Couple Families	Percent Female Headed Household	Percent High School Grads	Percent College Grads	Median Household Income	Percent of Families in Poverty
1)	Cherokee	232,000	27.3	75.1%	20.7%	58.4%	9.2%	$12,921	18.1
2)	Navajo	158,633	19.3	72.0	23.5	39.9	3.8	9,192	42.7
3)	Sioux	78,608	20.3	59.7	33.5	56.8	7.4	10,146	36.5
4)	Chippewa	73,602	20.7	63.2	30.2	54.8	5.3	11,808	26.9
5)	Choctaw	50,220	26.1	78.6	17.6	59.1	10.1	12,709	17.7
6)	Pueblo	42,552	21.3	71.1	22.1	58.3	6.3	12,171	28.5
7)	Iroquois	38,218	24.9	69.4	24.5	59.9	9.0	13,452	18.3
8)	Apache	35,861	21.4	68.8	25.2	53.9	5.6	11,336	29.6
9)	Lumbee	28,631	22.4	72.8	22.7	37.8	7.4	11,145	25.1
10)	Creek	28,278	24.4	76.8	19.4	65.1	11.0	13,163	16.7

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, *Characteristics of American Indians by Tribes and Selected Areas*, 1980.

group in the country. Of those who stay on the reservation, 14 percent make less than $2,500 a year (compared with five percent for the United States population as a whole), and only six percent make more than $30,000 (compared with 20 percent for the U.S.)." There are some positives however; the most important ones being an increase in population, better health care, better access to education and renewed interest in cultural practices for all American Indian populations.

When we think of the 278 Indian reservations where about one quarter of all American Indians live, we again see a small number of large concentrations and a large number of small units. The ten reservations which accounted for about half of all American Indians living on reservations in 1980 are shown in Figure 2 (on page 13).

Note that six of the ten largest reservations are located, in whole or part, in Arizona. Not only is the Navajo the largest by far, it more than doubled in size, from a population of 56,949 in 1970 to its 1980 population level of 158,633 according to U.S. census data. It is also huge in geographic terms, with over 14 million acres. About two-thirds of American Indians residing on reservations are in areas of 4,000 or fewer people. In fact, some reservations are very small indeed, with only 20 or so residents. While reservation populations have been increasing, urban Indian populations have been growing faster. (The over 200 Alaska Native villages are not included in these numbers.)

This analysis of population characteristics would not be complete without a comment on the consequences of having American Indians self-report their race. As author Matthew Snipp has pointed out, about 1.5 million people in the 1980 census indicated that they were of the "American Indian RACE." On the other hand, 6.8 million people reported they were of "American Indian ANCESTRY." The vast majority of people reporting they are of American Indian ancestry report their race as white, while most who respond that their race is American Indian also report American Indian for their ancestry. Snipp's 1989 analysis (referred to earlier) shows that "Americans of Indian Descent" have higher incomes, more education and better access to jobs, compared to "American Indians." In addition, Americans who claim some Indian ancestry are more broadly distributed around the U.S. than those who report themselves as American Indians, who are clustered in the states with the largest number of tribes and reservations. If the actual number of Americans with Native American background is six million, then perhaps more attention could be focussed on this most ignored of minority groups in the U.S.

How Healthy Are American Indians?

It should be clear from our introduction that when we look for causes of the Indian decline from over a million at the time of their "discovery" down to the lows of 200,000 back up to the current increasing levels, disease was a major factor, both in the decline years and in the newly expanding populations due in part to better health care and an expanded Indian Health Service. As of 1988, IHS was running 43 hospitals, 131 health centers and stations, and 37 other treatment locations, serving 1.1 million Indians[7] in 11 states. (In 1880, four hospitals and 75 physicians served the entire Indian population.)

Although there are still limitations (about 90 percent of the IHS service population lives in 11 states), there is little doubt that significant strides have been made in Indian health care. In addition, the data from IHS are excellent.

Live births have steadily increased during the 1980s, both in total number and in birth rate. In fact, in 1986, while the birth rate for the nation stood at 15.6 births per 1,000 population, Alaska Natives had a birth rate of 36.5, while American Indians were at 27.5. For every child born in the U.S., two children were born to the Alaska Native population! Granted that young populations have a higher percentage of their population in the child-bearing years, the numbers are significant. Alaska Natives seem to have the highest fertility rate of any group in the U.S. The increase from 1975 to 1986 was also the highest—from 30.2 to 36.5 children per one thousand population. (Remember, however, that the total births in the U.S. in 1986 were 3,756,547, while total Alaska Native births were 2,708.) Table 6 on page 16 should provide some perspective.

In addition to the news about increased numbers of Indian and Alaska Native births, there has been a striking decline in white fertility rates since the Baby Boom years of 1946–64. The *numbers* stay up because the Baby Boomers are now having their own babies, but fertility rates are quite low, and the white population is just barely maintaining itself. Thus, today's youth group is 30 percent nonwhite, while in 20 years it will be almost 40 percent. Twelve states including California, Texas, Florida, New York and (perhaps) New Jersey will have more minority youth than white. (And what will we call "minorities" when they are more than half?)

Some of the best health news is in terms of the reduction of Indian infant mortality, from more than twice the national average to below the average for all groups (see Figure 3).

In 1955, the Indian infant mortality rate (combined Indian and Alaska Native-Eskimos and Aleuts) was higher than the rate for African Americans; in 1986 it was half. A big problem for African Americans is prematurity and low birth weight, easily detected in an examination during the first trimester of pregnancy, as well as access to health care. These problems are being dealt with more successfully within the Indian community. (However, if you break out groups for 1986, Alaska Natives had an infant death rate of 13.9 per 1,000 live births, which was above the national average, while American Indians were at 9.5, suggesting that the delivery of health care is still difficult for many Alaska Native villages.)

Maternal deaths during childbirth have also declined for every group: for the U.S. as a whole, 1,581 mothers died in childbirth in 1958, while 272 died in 1987. For Indians and Alaska Natives, two mothers died in childbirth in 1987 compared to 16 in 1958.

When we look at causes of death among Indians and Alaska Natives, there are several surprises. First is the large number of accidental deaths, both auto-related and other, for ALL AGE GROUPS, from age 1 year to over age 65. The 1986 data for selected age groups are shown in Table 7 on page 17.

Indians and Alaska Natives over age 45 continue to show very high rates of accidental death, often alcohol-related, plus chronic liver diseases related to alcohol. (Suicide is not a leading cause of death for any group over age 45.) Older Indians begin to look more like the U.S. in terms of increased cancer deaths and diseases of the heart. Suicide is clearly a major issue for not only young people, but people over a wide age range. In fact, rates are a little higher in the mid-adult years (25–44) than for the early adult years, both for Indians and for the U.S. However, the Indian suicide rate is almost twice the rate for the rest of the nation; again, for people up to age 44. It appears that the clash of cultures that American Indians confront is more severe than that of any other minority group.

Some clues to the suicide rate come from information presented to the House Select Committee on Children, Youth and Families at hearings held in Albuquerque on January 10, 1986. A small sample study of suicides among Indian youth showed that compared to a control sample of similar Indian young people, the suicide victims were: (a) more likely to have been cared for by more than one person before age 15, (b) living with caregivers who were more likely to have been arrested frequently, (c) more likely to have experienced loss through divorce or desertion and, (d) twice as likely to have attended Indian boarding schools.

"Cluster suicides," in which one suicide triggers a number of other suicides, are reported among youth in a variety of situations (young black males), but the reports from American Indian sources suggest that this problem is more severe for them than for others. While little is known about this tragic situation, alcohol seems to be one *major* contributing factor.

Although homicide rates for American Indian and Alaska Natives are higher than the U.S. average, they are

[7]The data from the Indian Health Service include American Indians, Eskimos and Aleuts who reside in the geographic areas in which IHS has responsibilities. To be consistent with their wording, we use "American Indian/Alaska Native" when reporting their data. The reader should know that Alaska Native as used here includes Eskimos and Aleuts. IHS reports a service population of approximately 1.1 million as of Fiscal Year 1990 also.

Table 6

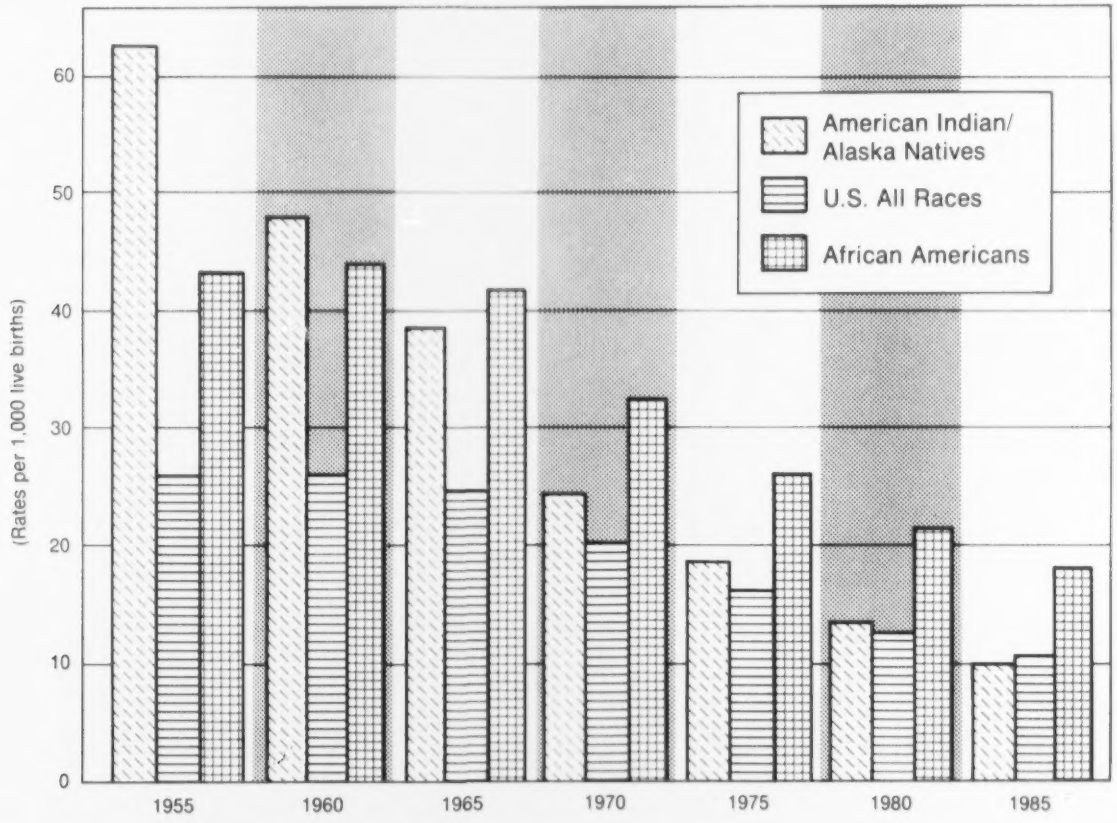
NUMBER AND RATE OF LIVE BIRTHS
AMERICAN INDIANS, ALASKA NATIVES, U.S. AND TOTAL NONWHITES COMPARED

	American Indian		Alaska Native		Total U.S.		Total Nonwhite
	Number	Rate	Number	Rate	Number	Rate	Rate
1986	38,312	27.5	2,708	36.5	3.757M	15.6	21.4
1980	31,742	26.7	2,195	33.7	3.612M	15.9	22.5
1975	23,695	26.7	1,762	30.2	3.144M	14.6	21.0
1970	21,100	32.0	1,646	32.0	3.731M	18.4	25.1
1965	20,352	36.0	2,018	42.3	3.760M	19.4	27.6
1960	19,188	41.7	1,966	46.4	4.258M	23.7	32.4

Note: Rate per 1,000 population.
Source: Indian Health Service, *Trends in Indian Health*, 1990.

Figure 3

INFANT MORTALITY RATES
American Indian/Alaska Natives, U.S. All Races and African Americans for Selected Years



Source: Indian Health Service, *Trends in Indian Health*, 1990.

Table 7

LEADING CAUSES OF DEATH FOR SELECTED AGE GROUPS AMERICAN INDIAN/ALASKA NATIVE AND U.S. COMPARED, 1986

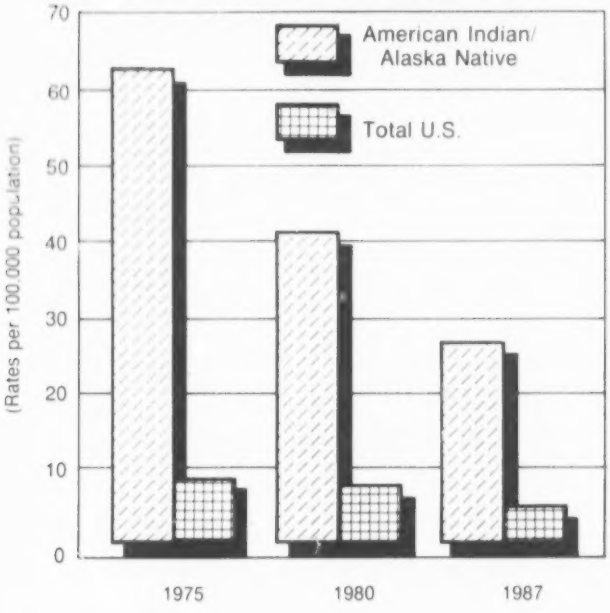
(Rates per 100,000 population)

Cause of Death	American Indian & Alaska Native		United States
	Number	Rate	Rate
Age 1–14 years:			
Accidents	368	27.5	14.8
Auto	174	13.0	7.9
Other	194	14.5	7.8
Suicide	19	1.4	0.5
Age 15–24 years:			
Accidents	887	88.6	51.2
Auto	614	61.3	39.0
Other	273	27.3	12.2
Suicide	240	24.0	13.1
Cirrhosis	8	0.8	0.2
Age 25–44 years:			
Accidents	1,283	108.1	35.9
Auto	800	67.4	20.9
Other	483	40.7	14.9
Cirrhosis	341	28.7	5.7
Homicide	299	25.2	14.1
Suicide	297	25.0	15.5
Age 45–64 Years:			
Accidents	502	86.2	32.7
Auto	254	43.6	15.1
Other	248	42.6	17.6
Cirrhosis	421	72.3	26.2

Source: IHS, *Trends in Indian Health*, 1990.

Figure 4

ALCOHOLISM DEATH RATES
American Indian/Alaska Native and U.S. Compared for Selected Years



Source: IHS, 1990.

small compared to other minorities, especially African American males. Although rates for all groups have declined since 1980, the differences are striking. In 1987, there were 14.1 homicides per 100,000 Indians and Alaska Natives, 8.6 for the U.S., and 26.4 for nonwhites. For most groups, male and female homicide deaths are almost equal; for American Indians and Alaska Natives, homicide deaths happen far more frequently to males.

Finally, although much progress has been made in alcoholism death rates over the years, the rates for American Indian/Alaska Natives are still much higher than those for the U.S. population (see Figure 4).

In addition, the National Clearinghouse on Alcoholism Information has indicated that almost 100 percent of all crimes for which an Indian is incarcerated were committed under the influence of alcohol while 90 percent of homicides and 80 percent of suicides were alcohol-related, as were 75 percent of all fatal accidents. Seventy percent of all treatment services from the IHS are alcohol-related. Publication of *The Broken Cord* by Michael Dorris (New York: Harper and Row,1989) made visible for many readers the tragedy of Fetal Alcohol Syndrome (FAS), for which the only known "cure" is prevention. Although FAS rates vary widely for different tribes and regions, the issue confronts the rights of the mother and those of the unborn in a most direct way. Alcohol abuse and the diseases related to alcohol remain the most serious health problem for American Indians. (The low cost of alcohol compared to other addictive drugs is one likely reason.)

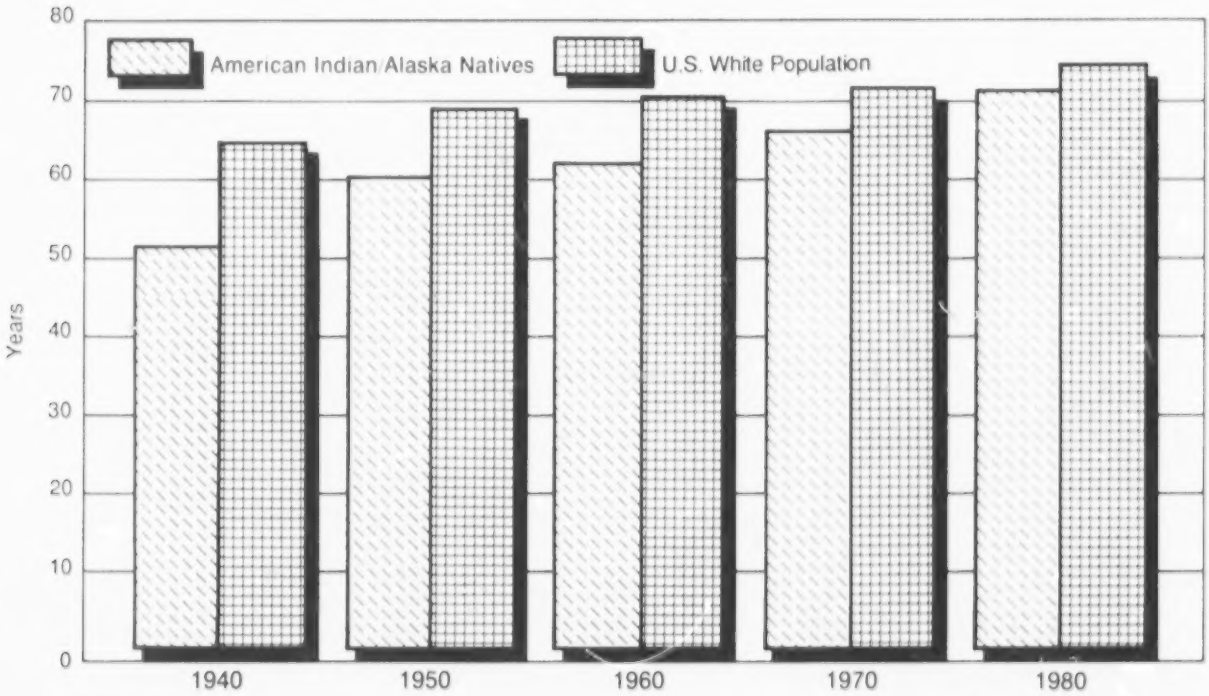
Cancer rates, on the other hand, for American Indians/Alaska Natives were below those for the U.S., while diabetes mellitus rates were higher in 1987 for Indian/Alaska Native populations. Overall, there have been some major improvements in life expectancy over the years compared to white populations (see Figure 5).

It should be clear that progress has been made in extending the lives of American Indians/Alaska Natives over the last 40 years. For this (and for their excellent data) the Indian Health Service seems to be on track. However, the alcohol and health problems associated with the clash of cultures, multiple identity and being "stuck in the horizon," (being *neither* sky nor land; Indian or American) are part of a larger picture which cannot be responded to by health services alone.

Figure 5

LIFE EXPECTANCY

American Indian/Alaska Natives and U.S. White Population Compared for Selected Years



Source: IHS, 1990.

Can Indians Be "Well-Educated" As Indians and As Americans Too?

"Throughout America, from north to south, the dominant culture acknowledges Indians as objects of study, but denies them as subjects of history. The Indians have folklore, not culture; they practice superstitions, not religions; they speak dialects, not languages; they make crafts, not arts."

Eduardo Galcano
Quoted in Paula Gunn Allen,
Spider Woman's Grandaughters
(New York: Fawcett Columbine, 1989).

Nowhere is the inconsistency in federal policy toward Indians more evident than in education. During the early 19th century, churches began major programs of evangelizing and missionary activity among Indian groups. While this was an advantage over extermination efforts previously attempted, the evangelizers rode rough-shod over Indian tribal customs, spiritual values, family loyalties and particularly the delicate process of preparing Indian young people to become successful Indian adults, to some extent substituting cultural genocide for physical. After the missionaries came the federal government:

"Paying little attention to the multitude of linguistic and other cultural differences among Indian peoples, and ignoring the varied traditions of child rearing in preparation for adulthood in the tribal communities, the government entered the school business in the late Nineteenth Century with a vigor that caused consternation among the Indians."

"Stuck in the Horizon"
Education Week (August 2, 1989).

In that culture plays so much of itself out through language in American society, the pervasive pattern of not allowing Indian children to use their own languages is at the heart of previous failures in Indian education. Over the past 30 years, a consensus has gradually developed that Indian children, regardless of their amazing diversity, should have the option of being bilingual and therefore bicultural and that Indians should be more in control of their future by having more control over their children's education. By putting some data together from a variety of sources, we can get a picture of Indian education today (see Table 8).

A summary of these numbers would reveal that: American Indian youth are overwhelmingly attending public schools, the dropout rate is the highest of any minority group; more American Indian youth are preparing to go to college, while SAT scores are below the U.S. average; and tribal college enrollments have increased during the 1980s. American Indian SAT scores were higher than those for African American and Hispanic students, but lower than white or Asian scores. American Indian scores increased steadily during the 1980s to a high of 828 in 1988, dropping to 812 in 1989. The number of American Indians taking the ACT test has also increased during the 1980s, and average scores improved during the period generally, except for the same decline reported on SAT scores during 1989. (The ACT drop was from 14.9 in 1988 to 14.7 in 1989.) There is no good explanation for this slight drop.

In addition, of the 181 schools funded by the BIA, about 70 are operated by tribes under contract with the BIA. In these schools the percentage of students in boarding schools has declined from 64 percent in 1970 to 30 percent in 1988. Like the 24 tribal colleges, these schools are working with low budgets, few library books and other teaching resources, as well as a number of serious daily constraints. In most cases, each student has to be educated "twice"—once as an Indian and once for the U.S. "mainstream," yet the available resources are very small, about $1,900 per student per year in 1989 in the tribal colleges.

The National Education Longitudinal Study of 1988 (NELS:88) provides some useful background for eighth grade students in the U.S., especially Native Americans, who are usually lumped in the "other" category. Several factors help to explain the high dropout rate. First, 29 percent of Indian eighth graders had repeated at least one grade, compared to 26 percent of African Americans, 23 percent of Hispanics, 16 percent of whites and 12 percent of Asians. A student who has been made to repeat a grade is about 20 percent more likely to drop out of school. In 1988, over 40 percent of American Indian and African American eighth grade students scored in the lowest quartile on tests of history, math, reading and science, explaining why higher percentages of American Indian and African American students are made to repeat a grade.

Second, 19 percent of eighth grade American Indian students expect that they will drop out of high school or, at best, graduate from high school but not go on further. This compares to 17 percent of Hispanic students, 12 percent of whites, 10 percent of African Americans and seven percent of Asians. Expectations are a powerful self-fulfilling prophecy, especially among youth. (If you have told all your friends that you are expecting to drop out of high school, you probably will.) It also seems that a smaller percentage of the parents of Native American youth expect them to go to college, which also may be a contributing factor.

Third, about 11 percent of eighth grade Native Americans missed five or more days of school during a four week period, close to the ten percent level for Hispanics. (Less than ten percent of Asians, whites and African Americans reported missing five or more days.) Missing large numbers of school days makes it difficult to catch up, especially in the cumulative learning areas like math, natural sciences and languages.

Fourth, a very small percentage of American Indians/Alaska Natives in eighth grade are planning on a college preparatory curriculum, while a large percentage have not yet made up their minds (see Table 9 on page 23).

Fifth, in other "risk" dimensions, American Indian/Alaska Natives have their own profile—high on having repeated a grade, single parents, language problems, low income, sibling who dropped out and hours of time alone (see Table 10 on page 23).

Table 8

AMERICAN INDIAN EDUCATION PROFILE

Indian Elementary and Secondary School Enrollment, 1986[1]	**391,937**
Percent in BIA Schools	**10%**
Percent in Private Schools	**5%**
Percent in Public Schools	**85%**
Indian Dropout Rate, 1988[2]	**35.5%**
U.S. Dropout Rate, 1988	**28.8%**
Number of Indian Students Taking SAT Test, 1976[3]	**2,632**
Number of Indian Students Taking SAT Test, 1989	**18,005**
Mean Indian SAT Score, 1989	**812**
Mean U.S. SAT Score, 1989	**903**
Number of Indian Students in Higher Education, 1986–87[3]	**89,000**
Tribal College Enrollment, 1981 (FTE)[4]	**1,689**
Tribal College Enrollment, 1989 (FTE)	**4,400**

Source: [1]BIA, *Report on BIA Education: Excellence in Indian Education through the Effective School Process*, March, 1988.
[2]National Center for Education Statistics, *Dropout Rates in the United States, 1988*.
[3]Quality Education for Minorities Project, *Education That Works: An Action Plan for the Education of Minorities*, (Report Summary), Massachusetts Institute of Technology, January 1990.
[4]American Indian Higher Education, (1989), cited in *Black Issues in Higher Education*, (December 7, 1989).

Table 9

PERCENTAGE OF EIGHTH GRADERS PLANNING TO ENROLL IN VARIOUS HIGH SCHOOL PROGRAMS BY RACE AND ETHNICITY, 1988

	College prep.	Voc/tech	General	Don't know
Asian/Pacific Islander	37.1%	17.6%	9.7%	24.6%
Hispanic	22.5	22.3	10.6	29.0
African-American	24.7	25.9	9.7	23.1
White	30.9	15.9	16.0	24.6
American Indian/Alaska Native	17.2	22.8	9.6	34.6

Source: National Center for Education Statistics, National Education Longitudinal Study of 1988 (NELS: 88), *A Profile of the American Eighth Grader*, July 1990.

Table 10

PERCENTAGE OF EIGHTH GRADERS WITH VARIOUS RISK FACTORS BY RACE AND ETHNICITY, 1988

	Single Parent	No H.S Diploma*	Limited English	Income Less Than $15,000	Has a Sibling Who Dropped Out	Home Alone More Than 3 Hrs.
Asian/Pacific Islander	14.2%	8.8%	7.1%	17.8%	6.1%	15.9%
Hispanic	23.4	33.4	8.8	37.5	16.0	16.3
African American	46.5	15.8	1.6	47.0	13.0	19.5
White	17.7	6.2	0.8	14.1	8.8	12.0
American Indian/ Alaska Native	31.1	13.4	8.6	40.1	15.1	18.6

*Neither parent has high school diploma.
Source: NELS:88

In addition to these data from NELS:88, it may also be that there are more reasons for Native Americans to "stop out" in such a way that they are then counted as a "drop out." It is very difficult (and expensive) to track persons as they move from school to school, and especially if they move from school to work to school.

Similarly, if we look at the group who graduated from U.S. high schools in 1980, the following percentages (see Table 11) had been enrolled in some form of higher education by 1986.

Table 11

1980 HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES WHO HAD BEEN ENROLLED IN SOME FORM OF HIGHER EDUCATION BY 1986

Asians	91%
White	71%
African American	67%
Native American	64%
Hispanics	61%

Source: *High School and Beyond*, 1988, p.6.

Although the numbers are still not acceptable in terms of access, it does appear that a higher percentage of Native American youth are making the transition from high school to college than in the past. However, there are very few data available on how many Native Americans of those who enter college actually graduate. (Dr. Robert Wells, in an article, "A Foot In Each World" *Black Issues in Higher Education*, March 29, 1990, reported in a study of 79 colleges with four percent or more Native American students in 1989 that only about one in four such students stayed through to graduation.) Recent studies of African American students have found that it takes an average of five years to graduate, generally because of the need to take time off to make enough money to return to college.

One would also expect a large number of Native American students to do the same thing, and be recorded as dropouts when "stop outs" would be a much more accurate description. Even for whites, an increasing proportion are taking longer than four years to complete their college education. As college costs continue to outstrip cost of living increases by a wide margin, we can expect this trend to continue. (In addition, about 40 percent of the 13 million students in higher education are part time, making "reasonable progress toward the degree" even harder to figure.) We may, therefore, be missing many Native Americans who, like more and more college students, are not "graduating on time from their originating college."

Looking at the information as a whole, it would seem that the decade of the 1990s might be one in which American Indian youth could make significant progress in travelling both roads—one toward "mainstream" academic achievement and access to the job structures that follow from it; the other being improved access to their own rich cultural tradition, languages, values and learning.

As more tribal colleges and BIA contract schools are infused with Indian leadership, we can hope that more Indian youth will be proud to be Indians and proud to be U.S. citizens. But this hope is unlikely to become a reality with the existing level of federal and state resources for American Indians, plus the lack of knowledge and understanding of American Indians on the part of the American people and its governments. A sense of urgency is appropriate, but will be very hard to create in the U.S. population.

Can Indians Get Good Jobs Without Leaving the Reservation?

The area of Indian employment (and unemployment) is one of the most difficult areas to deal with we have examined. It is also of crucial importance in terms of the next several decades, with one issue at the top: "Will American Indians have to leave the reservation in order to get good jobs?" With few exceptions, the current answer is yes. (A majority of American Indians who have received a college degree do not currently live on a reservation.)

Probably the best recent data come from a January 1989 study by the BIA. However limited the data, the numbers are clear. The BIA report looked at the *949,000* American Indian/Alaska Natives who represent the service populations of the BIA, **living on or adjacent to reservations** in 31 states. (The 1980 census counted a total of 1.5 million in the U.S.) The BIA data, however, probably isolate the most difficult problems of Indian employment (see Table 12).

Table 12

INDIANS LIVING ON AND ADJACENT TO RESERVATIONS BY SELECTED CHARACTERISTICS JANUARY 1989

Total Population	949,075
Under Age 16	314,377
Age 16–64 years	574,022
Age 65 years and over	60,676
Unable to Work:	
Student	86,257
Other	103,079
Employed	233,476
Earning $7,000 or more Annually	152,014
As a Percent of Total Employed Population Age 16–64 years	26%
Not Working but Able to Work	211,886
Seeking Work	158,582

Source: Bureau of Indian Affairs, *Indian Service Population and Labor Force Estimates*, January 1989.

Of the 384,686 people aged 16–64 who were able to work, 233,476 had jobs. Of those working, about 65 percent were making $7,000 or more. Of those not working, three quarters were seeking work. Indeed, the size of the group "able to work" but unemployed is almost as large as the working population! Clearly, there are few jobs on or adjacent to reservations, compared to the number of people who wish to work. Also, there is little information about what these working people were actually doing or what their job future looks like.

Data for states show major differences in this BIA study. (Thirty-one states were included.) The percentage of those unemployed and seeking work ranges from 74 percent in South Dakota to 12 percent in Texas. This certainly sheds some light on other troubling signs in South Dakota which were discussed earlier. The South Dakota population in this study was 58,201, while the Texas group was only 1,320. The California group only totalled 28,815, while Arizona, New Mexico and Oklahoma were proportionately larger, as was South Dakota, Washington and Alaska, consistent with the concentration on reservations. What DOES emerge from the numbers is that reservations cannot generate the jobs needed to support Indian families. Our beginning hypothesis—that people need to leave the reservation in order to get good jobs—seems amply confirmed.

Another way to think about the question of whether Indians need to leave the reservation in order to get good jobs is to ask what careers American Indians are preparing for. During 1987, institutions of higher education awarded 436,308 associate degrees, with 361,819 going to whites, 35,466 to African Americans, 19,345 to Hispanics, 11,794 to Asian/Pacific Islanders, 3,196 to American Indian/Alaska Natives, and 4,688 to aliens. (For American Indians/Alaska Natives, 1,263 were men, 1,933 were women.) The larger clusters of subject areas in which American Indian/Alaska Natives received their degrees are shown in Table 13.

Table 13

ASSOCIATE DEGREES AWARDED TO AMERICAN INDIANS/ALASKA NATIVES BY SELECTED SUBJECT AREAS, 1986–87

Major Field of Study	*Number*	*Percent*
Business and Management	811	25%
Education	134	4
Engineering Technologies	332	10
Health Professions	403	13
Liberal/General Studies	813	25
Protective Services	81	3
Public Affairs	63	2
Visual and Performing Arts	175	5
Other	384	12
Total	3,196	100%*

*Total may not add exactly because of rounding.

Source: National Center for Education Statistics, *Digest of Education Statistics, 1989.*

At the bachelor level, 991,260 degrees were awarded in 1987, 3,971 to American Indian/Alaska Natives. Of this total 1,819 were male and 2,152 were female. In looking at the data by field, several clusters were added to the list above (see Table 14).

Table 14

BACHELOR DEGREES AWARDED TO AMERICAN INDIAN/ALASKA NATIVES BY SELECTED SUBJECT AREAS, 1986–87

Major Field of Study	Number	Percent
Business and Management	783	20%
Communications	132	3
Computer, Info. Science	116	3
Education	452	11
Engineering	214	5
Health Professions	274	7
Home Economics	119	3
Liberal/General Studies	133	3
Life Sciences	147	4
Psychology	186	5
Public Affairs	127	3
Social Sciences	464	12
Visual and Performing Arts	184	5
Other	640	16
Total	3,971	100%

Source: Ibid.

In 1987, 289,341 masters degrees were awarded, 1,104 of them to American Indian/Alaska Natives, 517 men and 587 women. Areas of major concentration are shown in Table 15.

Table 15

MASTERS DEGREES AWARDED TO AMERICAN INDIANS/ALASKA NATIVES BY SELECTED SUBJECT AREAS, 1986–87

Major Field of Study	Number	Percent
Business and Management	170	15%
Education	376	34
Public Affairs	135	12
Health Professions	62	6
Other	361	33
Total	1,104	100%

Source: Ibid.

The National Center for Educational Statistics also reports that 34,033 doctoral degrees were awarded in that base year (1986–87), 104 to American Indians/Alaska Natives, nearly half—49 in education, and 16 in psychology. In 1987, 304 American Indian/Alaska Natives received first professional degrees, 66 (22 percent) in medicine (MD), 31 (10 percent) in veterinary medicine and 152 (50 percent) in law.

In general, these are pragmatic majors, usually areas in which jobs are rather easily obtained. They are also jobs (education, medicine, computer science, law, business and management, visual arts) in which there will be openings in a variety of places, including some on reservations giving direct service and benefit. Given the amount of indecision in American Indians/Alaska Natives sophomores in high school, it would be wise to publicize what other Indian students have majored in and why, as well as some success stories to show that it can be done.

Sixty-six MD's a year is not enough for a population of nearly 1.5 million, but the fact that it CAN be done should be of importance to Indian youth, now that over half of the Indian graduates from high school are going on to some kind of further education. (What we do not know is the number of those who receive college degrees who have returned to reservations and villages to use their skills to benefit their own people.)

It would be wise to publicize what other Indian students have majored in and why, as well as some success stories to show that it can be done.

This rather optimistic scenario suggests that some American Indians can do well in the traditional U.S. success route via education and jobs. It goes without saying that the number of American Indians attending college are very small, and need to be doubled before parity with other groups in the country could be argued.

Many interesting ventures are now going on trying to "incubate" small businesses on and adjacent to reservations, generating jobs and income in businesses run by tribal members themselves. This creating of entrepreneurial ventures (especially in sciences and technology applications) on reservations could become a powerful instrument of job generation for Indians, by Indians. Tribal colleges also have potential for generating new jobs as well as new skills. The more these activities are led by American Indians, the better will be their chances for success and significance.

Major Sources Used in Preparing This Report

Allen, Paula Gunn. *Spider Woman's Granddaughters*. New York: Fawcett Columbine, 1989.

The American Indian Science and Engineering Society and the College Board. *Our Voices, Our Vision: American Indians Speak Out for Educational Excellence*. April 1990.

American Indian Science and Engineering Society, *Winds of Change*, Volume 4, Number 4, (Autumn 1989).

Bureau of Indian Affairs. *Indian Service Population and Labor Force Estimates*. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of the Interior, January 1989.

Bureau of Indian Affairs. *Report on BIA Education: Excellence in Indian Education Through the Effective Schools Process*. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of the Interior, March 1988.

Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching. *Tribal Colleges*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1989.

Education Week, "Stuck in the Horizon," August 2, 1989.

Fuchs, Estelle and Robert J. Havighurst. *To Live On This Earth: American Indian Education*. New York: Doubleday Anchor, 1972.

House Select Committee on Children, Youth and Families. *Native American Children, Youth and Families*. (Hearing held in Albuquerque, New Mexico, January 10, 1986.) Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1986.

Indian Health Service. *Trends in Indian Health, 1990*. Washington, D.C.: Department of Health and Human Services, 1990.

National Center for Educational Statistics. *Dropout Rates in the U.S., 1988*. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Education, 1988.

Native American Legal Rights Fund. *Legal Review*, Volume 15, 1990.

O'Brien, Eileen M. "The Demise of Native American Education," in *Black Issues in Higher Education*. February, March and April, 1990.

Quality Education for Minority Project, *Education that Works: An Action Plan for the Education of Minorities, (Report Summary)*. Massachusetts Institute of Technology, January 1990.

The Smithsonian Institution. *A Nation of Nations*. New York: Harper and Row, 1976.

Snipp, C. Matthew. *American Indians: The First of This Land*.New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1989.

Thornton, Russell. *American Indian Holocaust and Survival: A Population History Since 1492*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1987.

U.S. Census Bureau. *Characteristics of American Indians by Tribe and Selected Areas*. Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, (February) 1990.

U.S. Census Bureau, *Statistical Abstract of the United States, 1990*. Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1990.

U.S. Census Bureau. *We, The First Americans*. Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, (February) 1990.

U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. *Digest of Education Statistics, 1989*. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, December 1989.

U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, *National Longitudinal Study of 1988: A Profile of the American Eighth Graders*, Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, June 1990.

U.S. General Accounting Office. *Special Education for Indian Children*. Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1990.

Appendix—Additional Acknowledgements

The Institute for Educational Leadership's Center for Demographic Policy would like to thank the following people and organizations for their willingness to provide information and references on American Indian data. Their assistance is deeply appreciated.

Mr. Jim Anderson
California State Data Center

Mr. Dave Archambault
American Indian Higher Education of Consortium (DC)

Albert Barros
National Services (DC)

Mr. Robert E. Bartman
Department of Elementary & Secondary Education (MO)

Mr. Turner Bear, Jr.
Cherokee Nation (OK)

Dr. Barney Bérubé
Department of Educational and Cultural Services (ME)

Ms. Karol K. Chaska
State Board of Education (IL)

Ms. Gail Chedak
Morning Star Foundation (DC)

Ms. Anita Chisolm
Southwest Regional Center (OK)

Ms. Ellouise C. Collins
Division of Compensatory Education
Department of Education (GA)

Mr. P. Sam Deloria
American Indian Law Center, Inc.

Ms. Barbara A. Dunbar
Department of Education (LA)

Ms. Pam Dunham
Department of Education (MI)

Ms. DeVee Dykstra
South Dakota State Data Center

Mr. William Gollnick
Oneida, WI

Dr. Charles Gourd
Indian Affairs Commission (OK)

Dr. Duane Hale
NARIS-American Indian Institute
Continuing Education and Public Service
The University of Oklahoma

Mr. James Hardin
Lumbee Regional Development Association, Inc. (NC)

Mr. George Haus
Washington State Data Center

Ms. Cynthia A. Hearn
Department of Education (SC)

Ms. Betty Jeffries
Arizona State Data Center

Mr. Bob Johnson
New Mexico State Data Center

Dr. Ted Jojola
Native American Studies Center
The University of New Mexico

Ms. Gay Kingman
National Congress of American Indians (DC)

Mr. Mark LaScola
Arizona Department of Education

Dr. Bill Maehl
The Fielding Institute (CA)

Ms. Betty Oxendine Mangum
Department of Public Instruction (NC)

Mr. Ron Meeks
Indian Health Service
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

Mr. William E. Mehojah, Jr.
Office of Indian Education Programs
Bureau of Indian Affairs

Ms. Joyce Merrill
Indian Pueblo Cultural Center, Inc. (NM)

Ms. Ramon Moore
American Indian Institute (OK)

Mr. Jack Moortel
Governor's Office for Substance Abuse (AZ)

Mr. Wil Numkena
State Office of Education (UT)

Ms. Bonnie Page
Department of Education—LEAD Project
Albuquerque, N.M.

Ms. Edna Paisano
Census Liaison with American Indians and
Alaska Natives
U.S. Bureau of Census

Ms. Elizabeth Parent
American Indian Studies Program
San Francisco State University

Ms. Valerie Plisko
U.S. Department of Education

Ms. Cindy Prince
State Department of Education (MD)

Mr. Dennis Pool
Nebraska Department of Education
Data Center

Mr. Robert Revicki
Department of Education (PA)

Ms. Carol S. Rocque
State Board of Education (CT)

Mr. Larry Rodgers
Division of Community Services
Navajo Reservation (AZ)

Dr. Laurence Rosen
Michigan State Data Center

Ms. Angelique Seay
United American Indians of Delaware Valley

Ms. Karen Selland
Oklahoma State Data Center

Mr. Robert Scardamalia
New York State Data Center

Dr. Joseph L. Shilling
State Department of Education (MD)

Mr. Russell Sims
Council of Three Rivers (PA)

Mr. James R. Smith
Curriculum and Instructional Leadership Branch
State Department of Education (CA)

Dr. John Steffens
Division of Public Responsibility
Continuing Education and Public Service
The University of Oklahoma

Mr. Wayne Teague
Department of Education (AL)

Mr. Dwight Threepersons
Office of Planning Development and Technical Assistance
Board of Education (NY)

Ms. Susan Tully
Texas State Data Center

Ms. Maureen M. Wark
Department of Education (MA)

Ms. Diana Williamson
Governor's Commission on Indian Affairs (LA)

CONCLUSION

After a period of major reductions in numbers, American Indians/Alaska Natives are today one of the most rapidly increasing populations in the United States, with a very young population and at a time when the U.S. population is aging rapidly. During the last two decades, life expectancy increased considerably for all Indian peoples. Health care, educational and occupational access and achievement also improved. Infant mortality rates decreased significantly. However, alcohol-related health problems, from suicide to cirrhosis to fetal alcohol syndrome to accidents, continue to plague many Indian communities where the root problems of poverty, cultural conflict and lack of self-sufficiency put a damper on recent health and education accomplishments. In many ways, "it was the best of times, it was the worst of times" for American Indians. With increased self-determination comes the agony of rising expectations. With opportunity for the young may come estrangement from elders.

Today's American Indian/Alaska Natives youth face a very different future from previous generations. Many educational and occupational opportunities are open to them, yet these opportunities may break the fragile connection between being an Indian and being an American. With 200 languages and dialects spoken within Indian communities, American Indians represent one percent of our U.S. population and FIFTY PERCENT of our diversity. (The U.S. population of almost 250 million speaks just two hundred other languages.) With this much cultural complexity in such a small population, there can be no simple solution to the youth's problem of being "stuck in the horizon," being neither Indian nor American. Yet, it is good that state and federal agencies are encouraging American Indians/Alaska Natives to make their own choices and determine their own destinies. One wonders whether they will continue to provide or even increase fiscal and human resources to Indians who will have increasing control over how those resources will be used. To do so is "blank check government" which is seldom a reality but might be very wise Indian policy for the American government for a decade or so.

When we are asked about any group of human beings, a natural question is: "How are they doing?" At the moment, the question can just barely be answered of American Indians/Alaska Natives, in that the information about them is so uncoordinated and fragmented. Particularly in a group of this complexity, we will need all the information the 1990 census can provide. Demographic data can be extremely useful for planning and designing programs for meeting the needs of groups. Areas needed for further study include: family structure and its relationship to dropouts; the age that Indians leave the workforce; women's employment and earnings; and the amount of movement to find jobs. Hopefully, we will have the data before the year 2000.